UNITED NATIONS

CERD

International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.
GENERAL

CERD/C/SR.1501
13 March 2002

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Sixtieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1501st MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 March 2002, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. DIACONU

CONTENTS

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Fourteenth periodic report of Austria

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS AND METHODS OF WORK (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.02-40688 (E) 120302 130302

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 6) (continued)

Fourteenth periodic report of Austria (CERD/C/362/Add.7; HRI/CORE/1/Add.8; CERD/C/319/Add.5; additional information provided by the delegation (document without a symbol, distributed in the meeting room in English only))

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the delegation of Austria took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. DOSSI (Austria), noting that the Committee had in 1999 requested in its concluding observations that the fourteenth periodic report should be an updating report, said that his delegation would address the specific issues raised in the concluding observations and provide complementary information on recent developments.

3. The Austrian Parliament had in 2001 amended the Constitution so that it proclaimed the country's commitment at all administrative levels "to its linguistic and cultural diversity, which has evolved in the course of time and finds its expression in the autochthonous ethnic groups, the language, culture and continued protection of which shall be respected, safeguarded and promoted". That new, basic provision would serve as a guideline for both the adoption of legislation and the administration, and was subject to review by the Constitutional Court.

4. The financial support provided to autochthonous ethnic groups had in the past two years been maintained at the same level, despite across-the-board budget cuts. The Austrian Parliament had recently adopted a new Broadcasting Act, which stipulated that the languages of national minorities must be represented in television programming, and which obliged major broadcasting companies to work together with local radio stations run by national minorities, as experience had shown that it had been nearly impossible for such minorities to run radio stations without external assistance. Since June 2000, bilingual signs indicating topographical names had begun to be posted in the easternmost State of Burgenland, which had significant Croat and Hungarian minorities.

5. Austria had on 20 February 2002 deposited its declaration under article 14 of the Convention. The European Union had recently issued directives against racial discrimination, and the Government was considering the adoption of comprehensive legislation to give effect to those directives and to establish a national body pursuant to article 14, paragraph 2, of the Convention. Article 13 of the Treaty establishing the European Community served as a basis for legislation to combat discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation. In addition, the Council of the European Union had recently adopted two directives respectively addressing all forms of discrimination in employment, and racial discrimination in broader fields, including many general aspects of everyday life. The Austrian Government was currently drawing up a single, comprehensive legislative act to give effect to those directives, and it should be adopted by July 2003 at the latest.

6. A reconciliation fund which had been established to compensate persons who had been subjected to forced or slave labour during the Nazi era had distributed some 110 million euros to tens of thousands of applicants, most of whom were living in Poland, the Czech Republic, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary and Russia. In addition, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism had paid out some 150 million euros in lump-sum payments to over 27,000 persons in its six years of existence. The Governments of Austria and the United States of America had in 2001 signed an agreement, which called for immediate compensation for survivors of the Nazi era and which established a general settlement fund for claims stemming from the liquidation of businesses, bank accounts and other holdings.

7. Mr. ANDRE (Austria) said that the Ministry of the Interior cooperated closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in particular in the framework of the Human Rights Advisory Council. Under the terms of the Security Police Act, the Council was entitled to send delegations to visit all administrative, command and enforcement services and premises of the security police. In practice such delegations had the right to visit all rooms on the premises and had full and free access to information, as the security police could not invoke official secrecy in their relations with them. The Council had issued a number of recommendations, which had been communicated to the Government and subsequently to Parliament. It had established committees, each comprising five to eight eminent persons knowledgeable in the field of human rights, to carry out its work in various fields.

8. The Ministry of the Interior placed a great deal of importance on providing instruction in human rights during basic and advanced training of its staff, as it was aware of the need to strengthen positive attitudes. Combating racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism was an essential aspect of the work of the law enforcement services. Basic and advanced training courses included instruction in applied psychology, sociology and enforcement services. Seminars on best practices for dealing with foreigners were also held, with the participation of representatives of NGOs such as Amnesty International, Caritas and others. In 2001, the Society for Threatened Peoples, the Viennese police, the University of Vienna and various African NGOs had together with the Ministry of the Interior established a dialogue, mediation and consultation project to improve relations between the police and the African community, and the Ministry of the Interior and the Anti-Defamation League had established a training programme for the Austrian police aimed at preventing racial discrimination.

9. Mr. MANQUET (Austria) said that there had been no major changes in penal law since the fourteenth periodic report had been submitted, but that the Ministry of Justice had taken part in the work of certain forums. In particular, it had participated in the drafting of the Council Framework Decision of the European Union on combating racism and xenophobia and in the working group of the Council of Europe on the drafting of a convention on cybercrimes, which would contain provisions banning racist propaganda and xenophobia material on the Internet.

10. Mr. YUTZIS (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee always appreciated the submission of regular reports by a State party, especially when, like the Austrian report, they followed the Committee's guidelines and afforded a valuable insight into the situation in a

particular country. The report in question had attempted to reply to each of the points raised by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/304/Add.64). His presentation would not be exhaustive, but would focus on aspects which were of particular relevance to the follow-up to the Durban Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. His analysis was based on a wide variety of documentation from United Nations sources and from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

11. He observed that exceptions were allowed to basic provisions of the Constitution and of civil and administrative law on the grounds of maintaining public order and asked whether racial discrimination did not in fact invariably endanger public order. Referring to paragraph 27 of the report, he wished to know how many university lecturers and schoolteachers came from minorities. What kind of training was received by teaching staff? How were programmes structured? What methodology was used? He enquired whether the relevant authorities monitored the curriculum and the language employed in textbooks. Those points were pertinent because the Programme of Action adopted at the Durban Conference had particularly stressed the importance of education. It was not only vital that minorities should have access to schooling; it was also essential that textbooks on key subjects should impart the right values.

12. Turning to Austria's replies to the Committee's concluding observations, he said that he did not understand paragraphs 39 and 40 of the report, which talked about the subjective or objective application of the law. He asked the delegation to clarify the logic of those two paragraphs, which totally escaped him and which appeared to end with a non sequitur.

13. As for the response to item 6, he considered that paragraph 42 contained an astonishing assertion. He failed to see how the differentiation between two classes of citizens could not objectively be regarded as stigmatizing and discriminatory. He was surprised to learn that the differentiation was based on the fundamental freedoms of nationals of the European Economic Area and, in that connection, he asked if freedom was an absolute notion related to one group and why higher priority was attached to the fundamental freedoms of nationals from that particular area.

14. He was worried by the situation of the Roma. Paragraph 44 gave the impression that everything was fine, but other information suggested the contrary, namely that the majority of the Roma population was disadvantaged and unable to defend its interests. The report included no statistics and the Committee would therefore like to have more detailed facts and figures.

15. While he had been pleased to hear about the efforts made in Austria to give human rights training to law enforcement officials, he knew of two cases in which foreigners appeared to have been subjected to police harassment. In the first instance, a restaurant owned by a Kenyan had been inspected by the police at ridiculously short intervals and even the identity of customers had been checked; in the second a church-run shelter for refugees had been repeatedly searched by the police on the pretext that the Africans living there were dealing in drugs. Furthermore, he was in possession of information that certain groups of foreigners were constantly stopped and searched in the street as if all persons with specific racial features were potential criminals and,

in his opinion, that treatment amounted to racial discrimination. He had also been told that foreigners were unable to obtain licences to drive taxis in Graz because the manager of the taxi company alleged that his clients preferred Austrian drivers and that an Austrian football manager had ascribed the defeat of his team to the fact that it had been playing Manchester United and not "a nigger team". He had spoken of only four cases, but he could quote many more and what distressed him was that, while racial discrimination was not necessarily part of State policy, it was evident in daily social attitudes. Clearly it was necessary to have laws which punished those who wounded the dignity of others and he asked the delegation what measures had been adopted to deal with such behaviour, since he had heard from NGOs that the Government was not doing all that it could in that respect.

16. He was troubled by reports he had received about the hardship experienced by a large number of refugees who, apparently, were not entitled to receive social benefits. In order to be eligible to such benefits, asylum-seekers had to prove their identity, but many could not do so. He wished to know if it was true that, since 1997, African asylum-seekers in a centre near Vienna had been separated from other refugees on the grounds that it would make it easier for the police to detect the use of and trafficking in drugs. Lastly, he asked what was being done to alleviate the desperate plight of refugees who had to survive without any State benefits.

17. Mr. VALENCIA RODRIGUEZ commended the Austrian Government for supplying a report which addressed the Committee's previous concluding observations and he asked the Government to provide information about any activities which were being carried out as a result of Austria's special responsibilities as the host State of the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia.

18. With reference to the report, he was pleased to find that the measures described in paragraphs 8 et seq. largely satisfied the requirements of article 2 of the Convention. He wished, however, to have more information about the work of the human rights coordinators, the implementation of the Broadcasting Act mentioned in paragraph 24 and events to commemorate anniversaries. In his view, human rights education was of primary importance and should be stepped up.

19. He appreciated the elucidation offered in paragraphs 39 and 40 and the fact that discrimination on the sole ground of nationality, race, colour or national or ethnic origin was inadmissible in Austria, although article 2, paragraph 2, of the Convention did allow different treatment in order to improve the lot of groups who were marginalized. In view of the fact that some regional or bilateral agreements established a preferential regime for certain national groups, which was contrary to the Convention, the Committee should perhaps study that question in greater depth.

20. He recommended that the measures to assist minorities outlined in paragraphs 43 et seq. should be expanded and asked the Government to report on progress in that respect. He welcomed what was said in paragraphs 53 et seq., but asked for confirmation that the Supreme Court ruling mentioned in paragraph 62 also applied to the employees of a pub or restaurant. He would like to know what had become of the draft amendment to the Industrial Relations Act and what action had been taken by the independent body for reviewing police activities.

21. He advocated heightened vigilance to ensure strict compliance with the precepts established in article 4 (b) of the Convention and to counter any tendency to resuscitate practices from the past. To that end, more human rights training should be made available to civil servants, police officers, judges and public prosecutors.

22. He was eager to learn whether the Austrian Government had decided to withdraw its declarations in respect of articles 4 and 5 of the Convention and to ratify the amendments to article 8, paragraph 6 thereof.

23. Mr. de GOUTTES congratulated Austria on the regularity with which it presented its reports and on its endeavours to respond to the Committee's concluding observations on the previous report. He welcomed the fact that Austria had made a declaration under article 14 of the Convention and had amended article 8, paragraph 2, of the Constitution. He had been pleased to hear about the human rights training given to law enforcement officials and about the sentences handed down by the courts for racist offences.

24. Referring to paragraphs 79 and 80 of the report he said that, although he understood Austria's reluctance to gather disaggregated demographic data, the Committee needed such information in order to obtain a precise picture of the ethnic make-up of a country and fulfil its supervisory function. Although paragraphs 23 and 53 stated that section 283 of the Penal Code punished incitement to hostile action and activities inspired by National Socialist ideas, he believed that that section did not fully meet the requirements of article 4 (a) and (b) of the Convention, even though under Austrian law racist or xenophobic motives constituted aggravating circumstances leading to the imposition of more severe penalties. For that reason, the Committee should reiterate its recommendation that comprehensive legislation should be introduced to prevent racism.

25. He had noted that a number of provisions of administrative law offered protection against racial discrimination, but none of them established penalties for racist offences. He therefore wished to know if any such penalties had been imposed. In that context, he took the view that the rule in the Industrial Code referred to in paragraphs 12 and 65 was of the utmost importance, because it permitted the punishment of racial discrimination in the private sector. Had any sentences actually been passed for such offences? The statistics given in paragraph 91 were unrepresentative, since they covered hostile action in general and might include acts which were not motivated by racism, or on the contrary might not take account of all offences prompted by racial intolerance. Similarly he wondered if the latest statistics included all racially motivated crimes. In paragraph 94, he had been struck by the huge number of convictions under the Prohibition Act and he requested more up-to-date figures.

26. He had been most interested to read the information on the Roma given in paragraphs 44 and 45 and was curious to know what stage had been reached in the project to codify the Romany language and compile suitable teaching materials in it.

27. Mr. TANG Chengyuan, referring to paragraphs 39-42 of the report, said that Austrian legislation drew two basic distinctions: between Austrians and foreigners; and between different groups of foreigners. Although a distinction between citizens and non-citizens was permissible

under the Convention, it should not entail any difference in the way those persons were treated. In the light of the delegation's comments and NGO reports about racist sentiments and incidents in the State party he urged the Government to pay due regard to the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of foreigners, notwithstanding its interpretation of article 1 of the Convention. He questioned the statement to the effect that the differentiation between various categories of foreigners according to their nationality was based on the fundamental freedoms of EEA nationals enshrined in the Agreement on the European Economic Area (para. 42). Europeans could be treated differently from the nationals of other regions only where relevant bilateral agreements existed. Having moved from a policy of three to two circles on aliens, for instance, Switzerland was now envisaging adopting legislation to remove remaining disparities. He hoped Austria would follow its example and accord more favourable treatment to non-Europeans who had been resident in the country for a long time.

28. He welcomed the fact that a large number of refugees had been granted asylum in Austria. However, according to NGO sources the State could do much more in the way of providing assistance. Many refugees had difficulty eking out a living and had to rely on charity. There had also been allegations of excessive use of force against foreigners by Austrian law-enforcement officials. On the positive side the Government had provided compensation for the victims of Nazi war crimes and had taken punitive measures against racist organizations. Improvements in other areas would further enhance Austria's reputation.

29. Mr. KJAERUM asked for more information on the new human rights body to be established in connection with article 14 of the Convention. What would be its relationship with the Human Rights Advisory Council? Would it be established along the lines of the independent national human rights institutions called for in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the recent World Conference Against Racism or would it have a broader mandate in accordance with the Paris Principles?

30. He would welcome further details on human rights training for police officers. Was training provided at all levels or targeted only at specific groups? Did it form part of police officers' practical training or was it confined to theory? Were there any statistics available on the different ethnic origins of members of the police force? Were there any campaigns to recruit employees from different ethnic backgrounds?

31. Ms. JANUARY-BARDILL questioned the effectiveness of the measures to combat prejudice referred to in paragraph 28 of the report. Prejudice was an emotion. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to focus efforts on combating discrimination, which was the direct consequence of prejudice and easier to quantify. In that connection, was there any training provided for the victims of discrimination, such as empowerment courses to build self-esteem?

32. She commended Austria's efforts to help minority groups preserve their cultural traditions by providing financial assistance for that purpose. However action in the cultural sphere would not suffice. Were such efforts intended merely to manage instead of remove existing disparities in society? What effort was the dominant culture in Austria making to ensure a better understanding of minority groups and improve their integration? To what extent were minority groups represented in the Austrian police force, local government and in essential services? Their participation at all levels of society would in the long term make the difference.

33. Mr. AMIR said that there was a considerable gap between the discriminatory asocial behaviour of certain elements in Austrian society, as illustrated by the Rapporteur, and the efforts of the Government to eliminate racial discrimination through the adoption of appropriate legislative, punitive and preventive measures, as outlined in the report. He considered that thus far the Government had been fairly successful in limiting the scope for such behaviour and he was confident that, following its acceptance of the article 14 procedure and through greater cooperation with the Committee, the situation in the State party with respect to the Convention would improve.

34. Mr. THORNBERRY drew attention to the phrase "shall refrain from any distinction on the sole ground of race, colour, national or ethnic origin" used in paragraphs 9, 11 and 12 of the report with reference to the Federal Constitutional Law Implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. That was a very narrow proscription of discrimination, which was not in line with the broader definition given in article 1 of the Convention. He also questioned the use of the term "unjustified" before "discrimination" in paragraph 11 - all discrimination was unjustified.

35. The report contained no information related to article 3 of the Convention, which prohibited all forms of racial segregation and apartheid. As explained in the Committee's General Recommendation XIX, racial segregation could arise not only from government policies but also as a result of residential patterns in cities influenced by group differences in income, sometimes combined with differences of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin. In the current era of globalization, with increased population flows and immigrant communities, he wondered whether such residential patterns existed in Austria and, if so, how the Government responded to them.

36. Referring to paragraph 39, he asked what was deemed as being "a reasonable ground" allowing for a difference in treatment among aliens. He expressed concern that considerations of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin might be excluded. The Constitutional Court's ruling referred to in paragraph 39 called into question some of the Committee's basic interpretations. A further example was to be found in paragraph 40. To what extent did the Constitutional Court take into account the Committee's comments and recommendations in connection with alleged violations of the Federal Constitutional Law implementing the Convention?

37. On the basis of information provided in paragraph 43, he took it that all minorities in Austria were autochthonous. Did that mean that they were regarded as being outside the scope of minority rights? He was not aware of a distinction between old and new minorities in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or other relevant human rights instruments. With reference to paragraph 44, he expressed the hope that, in the absence of special provision for Roma schoolchildren, appropriate levels of cultural and linguistic support would be maintained if not increased. As for the problem of providing more detailed demographic data, he observed that statistics relating to languages were available. Perhaps they could be refined along the lines requested by the Committee, without undermining the long-established concept of privacy enshrined in Austrian legislation. In conclusion, he said there was definitely a certain "invisibility" about the new minorities living in Austria that warranted clarification.

38. Mr. ABOUL-NASR began by recalling that Austria had been one of the countries that had contributed to the drafting of the Convention. Turning to the periodic report, he noted that paragraph 7 contained a number of references to the workings of the European Union. He asked the Austrian delegation not to assume that he, as a non-European national, knew what that was all about. The Committee was not a European club. Austria should explain what it wanted to say in the context of the Convention.

39. He asked why the words "religious belief" did not appear in the last sentence of paragraph 9, whereas they did in paragraphs 11 and 12. Could further information be provided on the Advisory Council referred to in paragraph 16. Paragraph 21 spoke of providing assistance to persons wishing to emigrate to Vienna. Was such assistance not offered throughout Austria? What about persons who wished to emigrate, say, to Graz?

40. He would like to know whether, in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001, the police and courts had received any complaints from Arabs or Muslims alleging harassment. If so, had the complaints been investigated? What action had been taken?

41. He enquired whether there was any legislation that made denial of the Holocaust punishable. If someone denied what was currently happening to the Palestinians or what had happened to the gypsies during the second world war, would that person be punished? He would be grateful to the Austrian delegation if it could provide him with a copy of the relevant legislation.

42. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as a member of the Committee, said that the concept of "autochthonous minorities" used in the report was not found in the relevant international or European instruments, which spoke of either "national", "ethnic" or "linguistic" minorities. What did "autochthonous" mean? What was the legal status of persons belonging to minorities that were not "autochthonous"? Did they have the same rights as persons belonging to the "autochthonous minorities"? In that connection, according to the State Treaty of 1955, the Slovenes were an Austrian minority, but the delegation had not said anything about them.

43. He agreed with the comments made about public order and racial discrimination. The Committee wanted all cases of racial discrimination to be addressed. The question of public order was a matter for the domestic legislation of each country, but the concept of racial discrimination should not be reduced to a question of public order.

44. He noted that statistical data were needed to see how the Convention was being implemented. They were required, for instance, for the purposes of education or for dual language topographic signs. How could a school be opened for minorities, for instance, if no statistics were available?

45. With regard to the phrase "sole ground of race, colour, national or ethnic origin", Mr. Banton had developed the idea that if the main ground of a complaint was discrimination, it was for the Committee to consider the issue. If there were other main grounds, then that was a

matter for other committees. The Durban Conference had introduced the concept of multiple discrimination, i.e. on several grounds. That had to be taken into account both in legislation and in the practical approach to the implementation of the Convention.

46. Mr. DOSSI (Austria) said that his delegation had been aware that during consideration of its last report, more detailed statistics had been requested, and it had attempted to have detailed information appended to the current report. Unfortunately, the annex had not been circulated in time.

47. The delegation of Austria withdrew.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS AND METHODS OF WORK (agenda item 4) (continued)

Discussion of a reply to the letter from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, to the Committee concerning the international community's response to the events of 11 September 2001 (continued) (CERD/C/60/Misc.22/Rev.5)

48. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked whether the Committee was adopting a statement or a draft resolution. He preferred a statement. Perhaps there should be less reference to terrorism, because the statement should concentrate on racial discrimination. In any case, he agreed on the whole with the draft proposal.

49. Mr. FALL said that as a letter had been received from Ms. Robinson, the Committee might also forward the statement to her as a letter.

50. Mr. SICILIANOS, supported by Mr. de GOUTTES agreed that the proposal constituted a statement and not a draft resolution.

51. Mr. YUTZIS suggested that the proposal would be easier to circulate in the form of a statement.

52. Mr. RESHETOV proposed a number of changes. He agreed in practice with paragraph 2, but thought the wording was too legalistic. He suggested replacing the formulation by a phrase from the preamble to the Declaration of the Durban Conference, which said that "no derogation from the prohibition of racial discrimination is permitted". That would also be a tribute to the work of the Durban Conference.

53. Concerning paragraph 4, he said that the words "security of the person" in the second line should be changed to read "security of person and protection by the State", as in article 5 (b) of the Convention. He also proposed inserting the word "dignity" after "liberty"; the arrest and harassment of persons because of their colour or religion violated their dignity.

54. Mr. THORNBERRY said that Mr. Reshetov's point on paragraph 2 was well taken. But there was a problem with the word "derogation", which could be used either in the strict sense in

making a derogation from the Covenant, or in a more general sense, as in the Durban Declaration, whereas the phrase "peremptory norm of international law" placed the principle of non-discrimination above treaty and custom.

55. He endorsed Mr. Reshetov's suggestion to insert, in paragraph 4, a reference to the dignity of the person.

56. The CHAIRMAN agreed with Mr. Reshetov's proposal on paragraph 2, but for the sake of clarity suggested retaining the original wording and adding the words "from which no derogation is permitted" at the end. He also endorsed the insertion of the word "dignity" in paragraph 4.

57. Mr. AMIR, referring to paragraph 4, said that there could be no liberty or security of the person without due process of law or international cooperation, and he therefore proposed recasting the phrase "matters concerning liberty and security of the person and due process of law, as well as international cooperation in judicial and police matters" to read "matters concerning due process of law, as well as international cooperation in judicial and police matters, concerning liberty and security".

58. Mr. SICILIANOS said that he had no objection to changing the formulation or inserting the word "dignity", but the formulations "liberty and security of the person" and "due process of law" were implicit references to articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Committee regarded those provisions as being of overriding importance.

59. Mr. de GOUTTES suggested that paragraph 4 could be improved by inserting the word "mainly".

60. Mr. RESHETOV agreed with Mr. de Gouttes, but preferred the words "in particular" as being more appropriate.

61. The CHAIRMAN felt that paragraph 4 could be left as it stood, but that the words " in these fields" could be inserted at the end to allow for Mr. Amir's concern.

62. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft proposal as a statement to send it to Ms. Robinson as a letter and to ask Mr. Thornberry to incorporate the suggestions made and submit the new text the following day.

63. It was so decided.

Postponement of consideration of Albania under the review procedure

64. The CHAIRMAN said that Albania intended to submit a report by the end of the year and therefore asked to be removed from the list of countries to be considered under the review procedure. He added that such requests were usually granted.

65. Mr. de GOUTTES said that, as the rapporteur for Albania under the review procedure, he had been in contact with a member of the Permanent Mission of Albania, who had just informed the Committee that Albania requested a postponement of the review procedure and would submit its periodic report in December 2002. It was the Committee's practice to postpone consideration under the review procedure when a State party announced that it would submit a report by the end of the year.

66. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked whether the request had been made in writing.

67. The CHAIRMAN replied that it had not, but that the Committee had in the past received other such oral requests and had granted them. The Committee would respond in writing and ask Albania to submit its report in December 2002.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.